

## **Haringey's Housing Strategy 2009-19**

### **Consultation feedback**

Consultation carried out between 26 January and 13 February 09

## 1. Introduction

This document reports on the results of the consultation process for Haringey's Housing Strategy 2009-19, which was carried out between 26 January and 13 March 2009.

The Housing Strategy is designed to set out plans for how the Council and its partners plan to improve housing in Haringey over the next ten years.

The draft strategy identifies as its vision the creation of:

*balanced neighbourhoods of choice, which meet the housing aspirations of Haringey's residents and offer quality, affordability and sustainability for current and future generations*

Four priorities framed the draft strategy:

1. To meet housing need through mixed communities which provide opportunities for our residents
2. To ensure housing in the borough is well managed, of high quality, and sustainable
3. To provide people with the support and advice they need
4. To make all homes in the borough a part of neighbourhoods of choice

These priorities guided how information was gathered during the consultation process, although steps were taken to ensure respondents could feedback on any aspect of housing they thought relevant.

## 2. Consultation materials

In order to communicate the content of the strategy and provide different methods for people to feedback, a number of consultation materials and communication techniques were used:

**Full draft strategy document** was available in hard copy and online. These were mailed to community and voluntary groups, along with copies of the consultation leaflet.

**Consultation leaflet** which contained a 'simplified' version of the vision and priorities (expanding them from four to eight, for ease of understanding) asking respondents to comment on these and identify which three they thought most important to housing in Haringey. Space was also provided for additional comments.

These were mailed out to community groups, distributed to customer service centres, libraries and community centres, taken to Area Assemblies and sent out when people contacted us.

**Web page** detailing the purpose of the strategy and consultation, with details of how to feedback.

**Article in Haringey People** (monthly magazine which focuses on Haringey issues, which is delivered to all residents in the borough) on the Housing Strategy and consultation information.

### **3. Who we consulted with and methods we used**

Residents, community and voluntary groups, council staff and organisations which deliver housing or have an interest in housing in Haringey where included in the consultation.

#### **Residents**

Residents of the borough were consulted with in a number of ways:

- Existing social housing forums were attended (Temporary Accommodation Forum, Resident Consultation Forum and Tenant Participation Panel), where a presentation was given on the strategy and then followed by feedback gathering exercises
- Six Area Assembly meetings (where local issues are discussed and residents get an opportunity to speak to community leaders and Councillors) where attended, where council officers could talk face-to-face with residents about housing issues and the strategy
- Consultation officers presented and gathered feedback at a Haringey Youth Council meeting
- Consultation officers presented and gathered feedback at the Older People's Partnership Board (this was a mixture of older people representatives, council officers and partners)
- Consultation leaflets were displayed in customer service centres, libraries and community centres
- Consultation leaflets were sent to resident associations and community groups alongside copies of the full strategy
- An article on the strategy was placed in 'Haringey People'
- Information was put on the Haringey council web site

#### **Organisations with an interest in housing and council staff**

- Presentations and feedback gathering at a Landlords Forum and Registered Social Landlord and Developers Forum
- Presentations and feedback gathering at forums and meetings with Safeguarding Adults Board, Older People's Partnership Board, Advice Providers Network, Acquisitive Crime Partnership Board, Integrated Housing Board, Enterprise Board, Safer Communities Executive Board, Well-being Chairs Executive, and Homes for Haringey (an arms length management organisation (ALMO) established to manage council-owned housing)
- Strategy distributed to Haringey Council staff, discussed at Haringey Council Corporate Policy Network, and other staff forums and workshops

#### **Community and voluntary groups**

Over 300 community and voluntary groups (these included groups which deal issues relating to race, sexuality, faith, mental and physical health, domestic

abuse, the environment, housing advice and homelessness) were mailed a copy of the strategy and copies of the consultation leaflet.

### **Housing Conference**

A Housing Conference was held on 18 February 2009, and was used as an opportunity to discuss the direction the council should take to meet housing aspirations over the next decade. 125 people attended, including representatives from housing associations, developers, landlords from the private sector, residents, representatives from community and voluntary organisations and officers from public sector agencies. The conference incorporated workshops which explored themes from the strategy.

### **4. Feedback**

In this section, feedback from the consultation has been organised according to the priority they address. Every feedback comment was treated as equal, so details have not been provided of who or which organisation said what.

An additional priority (Priority five) was added when feedback was analysed, in response to the weight of interest shown through the consultation in developing work around housing and environmental sustainability.

A total of 226 individuals supplied comments through the conference, consultation leaflets, area assemblies and contacting consultation officers directly. In addition, feedback was gathered through discussion at twenty four existing forums and partnership boards.

Overall, there was support for the priorities in the strategy. Key areas of feedback were:

- That partnership work is strengthened (with registered social housing providers, advice and support agencies and employment and training providers)
- That housing plays a positive role in communities and neighbourhoods (strengthening resident involvement and ensuring complimentary infrastructures are in place)
- That decent standards of management for rented homes (both private and social housing) are delivered
- That vulnerable adults are supported
- That the Housing Strategy contributes to Haringey's 'green agenda'
- That the strategy is effectively implemented

### **Findings from consultation leaflets**

Overall results from the consultation leaflets indicate that reducing homelessness, building more homes, safe and attractive neighbourhoods, improving social housing and making homes 'greener' were seen as the most important housing priorities for Haringey.

**Priority one: To meet housing need through mixed communities which provide opportunities for our residents**

*Supply new housing as a part of mixed communities*

- It was generally agreed that there is a need for more housing (a mixture of private and social) and that any new housing should be delivered in such a way which benefits the community.
- There was support for plans to provide a balance of tenure options so there is choice for residents.
- Regeneration projects must be led by the local community.

*Connecting housing to employment and skills*

- There was extensive support for actions in this section, respondents emphasised the need for housing providers to work in partnership to improve life chances by contributing to education, training and employment initiatives which will build peoples' skills.

*Maximise the supply of housing from existing homes*

- Actively addressing the use of empty properties in the borough was supported, alongside encouragement for the council in lobbying to be given the ability and resources to purchase empty properties.

*Work with residents and private sector landlords to look at alternatives to address Temporary Accommodation*

- There was agreement that work in the private sector would be a viable option to address the high numbers of temporary accommodation users. Concerns over the sustainability and security of this type of tenure were also raised, alongside the need to provide support for people considering this option.
- The need for a culture change was stressed, so that residents accept housing may be in the form of assured shorthold tenancies (AST) rather than tenancies for life.

**Priority two: To ensure all housing in the borough is well managed, of high quality and sustainable**

*High quality new build*

- There was agreement of the need for high quality new build and an increase in the number of large properties.

*High quality social housing*

- The improvement of housing management standards was identified as an issue, as was the need to build on relationships between registered providers of social housing and the Council to improve the management of housing.
- Best use must be made of Decent Homes funds (designed to improve the standard of social homes) in order that improvements are not superficial, but address more fundamental concerns.
- Consultation with residents was identified as needing to be strengthened in the Council.

#### *High quality private sector housing*

- A number of 'support and advice' issues were raised: the need to be able to challenge landlords on behalf of tenants, and landlords being kept up-to-date on their responsibilities and how they can take action when necessary.
- Respondents felt the securing of standards particularly important where private housing was to be used as a 'substitute' for social housing.

#### *High quality temporary accommodation*

- Respondents stressed the need to tackle overcrowding and disrepair issues.

### **Priority three: To provide people with the support and advice they need**

#### *Provision of high quality advice*

- There was agreement that 'housing advice' needs to look beyond housing and link with other forms of advice, for example around employment opportunities.
- Respondents commented on the need to think about how service users can be engaged with at an early stage to promote independence.
- There was support to implement schemes concerned with mortgage rescue and flexible tenure and to develop innovative mortgage products.
- Housing services having a more honest approach, when providing advice, was identified as an effective method for managing the expectations of service users.
- It was suggested that high standards of training in advice and support for Council and voluntary staff be re-enforced to ensure quality and consistency.

*Provide joined-up support through multi-agency working*

- The importance of strong partnerships and communications across all sectors of relevance to housing (health, employment, vulnerable service users) was stressed.
- It was requested that this section be called 'needs of vulnerable adults and partnership working' to reflect a whole-system approach that addresses the priorities of different service user groups (amongst these would be those with learning/physical disabilities, older people, users of adult mental health services, those with autism, alcohol and drugs dependents)
- There was an emphasis on addressing older peoples housing needs over the next ten years and an increase in low income older owner-occupiers

*Safeguarding children and young people*

- The need to engage with children in schools before they become homeless and effectively manage their views of the service was highlighted

**Priority four: To make all homes in the borough a part of neighbourhoods of choice**

- Respondents stressed that residents must be involved in the development and shaping of local areas and communities
- The need for more Houses of Multiple Occupancy in the borough was identified, while others stressed the need to safeguard family environments and ensure local communities are not negatively affected by this kind of accommodation
- The coordination of housing provision with good quality local services through area-based working was considered to be a fundamental.
- Infrastructure (such as transport and local enterprise) was seen as an important consideration when regenerating and designing areas.
- 'Designing out crime' was considered key in regeneration programmes.

**Proposed Priority five: To contribute to the Greenest Borough**

- Respondents stressed that building sustainable, well-designed housing was critical – this was also important with existing housing.
- A need for clear direction for landlords (social and private) regarding energy efficiency was reported.
- There was an emphasis on changing the behaviour of residents by education and training, alongside the promotion of green projects.
- It was suggested that recycling services should be tailored to meet the needs of the range of different types of homes in the borough.

### **General feedback**

Feedback which did not address specific priorities in the strategy was concerned with:

- The language in the vision being simplified and less oriented towards the housing profession
- Making clearer the links to existing strategies and areas of work (such as homelessness, travellers, older people) and illustrate structures and partnerships which will be used to deliver the strategy
- The need to recognise and respond to the Audit Commission inspection of Allocations and Lettings, Haringey London Borough Council 2008

### **5. Impact of feedback on the strategy**

Feedback from the consultation was used to inform the finished strategy and implementation plan.

A rolling three year implementation plan will be developed as an appendix to the strategy. This will demonstrate how its delivery will be achieved through supporting strategies, structures and partnerships, clearly identifying timeframes and responsibilities.

### **Priority one: To meet housing need through mixed communities which provide opportunities for our residents**

- To make reference to our commitment to ensuring that engagement with local communities is at the heart of regeneration and new development
- To look into options for providing longer security of tenure through private sector lettings for those on the Temporary Accommodation list
- To lobby for the local authority to have the ability and resources to purchase empty properties



**Priority two: To ensure all housing in the borough is well managed and of high quality and sustainability**

No changes to this section were considered to be required as a result of feedback, which reinforced the priorities identified in the strategy to strengthen standards.

**Priority three: To provide people with the advice and support they need**

- To strengthen the priority actions within 'high quality advice' to make explicit the need for housing advice to be strongly linked to advice provision in related areas, such as employment and training, and other support services, as well as advice around mortgage rescue and mortgage options
- To include a priority action on training for advice providers, and quality assurance, in relation to all housing advice providers in Haringey
- To change the title of 3.2 Provide joined-up support through multi-agency working to The needs of vulnerable adults and partnership working.
- To strengthen the content in this area relating to the needs of vulnerable adults, to support a whole system planning approach which moves away from a silo approach to specialist needs housing requirements. At the same time, this section to refer to a wider range of client groups
  - Key to this will be the development of a Move On Strategy, with the aims of making effective use of the borough's supported housing stock, and helping vulnerable people to become more independent and able to live in mainstream or general needs housing
- To refer, in the context of the proposed Older People's Housing Strategy, to the need to exchange some older sheltered accommodation stock to extra care stock, and look to providing some extra care stock for market sale

**Priority four: To make all homes in the borough a part of neighbourhoods of choice**

- To emphasise the need for residents to be involved in the shaping of local areas and communities
- To emphasise the role of design / asset management in reducing crime in community spaces and regeneration initiatives

**Priority five: To contribute to creating the Greenest Borough**

- To include an additional priority, "To contribute to creating the Greenest Borough". This priority will bring together actions that ensure the environmental sustainability of housing in the borough, including:

- Strong planning policies developed and agreed through the Local Development Framework
- The delivery of catalytic projects to drive change and innovation
- Housing providers to work with residents to inform, and to secure behaviour change, around their use of resources and the energy efficiency of their homes
- For regeneration and refurbishment projects to deliver high standards of environmental sustainability